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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8838
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1347
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1524
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0637
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000397

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR ER

SUBJECT: ERITREA ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL FROM IGAD

Classified By: AMB Scott H. DeLisi, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) The Government of the State of Eritrea(GSE) announced on April 21 that it had suspended its membership in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development(IGAD). In an official statement posted on www.shabait.com, the GSE claimed it was "compelled to take the move due to the fact that a number of repeated and irresponsible resolutions that undermine regional peace and security have been adopted in the guise of IGAD." The GSE further claimed it could "not be party to developments that hold one accountable both legally and morally."

¶2. (C) Andeab Ghebremeskel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for Asia, Pacific and Africa, refused to take Poloff's call concerning clarification of Eritrea's position. The Ambassador from the Netherlands, however, was able to speak with him, although Ghebremeskel merely repeated the party line that Eritrea will not be part of an organization whose decisions are politically incomprehensible and morally indefensible. In a separate conversation with Poloff, Djiboutian Ambassador Ahmed Issa Gaboebeh said that the GSE's decision was driven both by IGAD's lack of involvement in addressing the border problems between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the differences within IGAD on how to address the problems of its member state, Somalia. Gaboebeh further elaborated on GSE allegations that IGAD members -- namely Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia -- were merely puppets manipulated by the U.S. He expressed his concern over the future functionality of IGAD with Eritrea's withdrawal, as only five functioning states would remain.

¶3. (C) Comment: The GSE withdrawal from IGAD comes on the heels of its reportedly adamant opposition to the IGAD statement on Somalia issued in Nairobi on April 13. The GSE has fought strenuously against IGAD involvement in Somalia and regionally has allied itself with Sudan and Djibouti, although the GSE was the only government which registered its formal opposition to the IGAD statement. The GSE's position is part of its constant refrain that Eritrea is morally superior to others and they are the only ones who follow the rule of law) a position that has more holes than a sieve. By removing itself from regional or international entities that it cannot force to do its bidding, the GSE avoids being held accountable by such bodies for its actions. This eliminates yet another avenue for the international community to engage with the GSE in any sort of constructive

discussion. End Comment.
DeLisi